



ALASKA DEPT. OF FISH AND GAME PHOTO

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## Ranking Issues In Thorne River Management Planning

Deborah J. Henderson-Norton  
Resource Assistant  
Thorne Bay Ranger District  
Ketchikan Area  
Tongass National Forest  
P.O. Box 1  
Thorne Bay, Alaska 99919

Clemson Class of 1987

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## ABSTRACT

Author: Deborah J. Henderson-Norton  
Resource Assistant  
Tongass National Forest, Ketchikan Area  
Thorne Bay Ranger District  
P.O. Box 1, Thorne Bay, Alaska 99919  
(907) 828-3304

Title: Ranking Issues in Thorne River Management Planning

Abstract: The rapidly developing tourism industry in SE Alaska has brought about new recreation opportunities to be recognized on Prince of Wales Island. With the completion of new recreation lodges on the Island and the upgrade of the Forcast Highway System across 800 miles of gravel roads easy access to rivers and streams provide a unique recreation experience to visitors to SE Alaska. There is currently no River Management Plan or specific guidelines in the Forest Plan regulating use on these rivers.

This study first addresses the existing situation, and recognizes a need to determine if the existing users perceive a problem in the management of the Thorne River. The project deals specifically with local users and utilizes the Nominal Group Technique to assess the problem, develop issues and concerns and rank those issues as they are viewed by the recreation user. By taking a proactive look at Recreation River Management, the recreation experience can be maintained while allowing development of the new recreation opportunities primarily through issuance of road-based fresh water fishing outfitter/guide permits.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Author: Deborah J. Henderson-Norton  
Resource Assistant  
Thorne Bay Ranger District  
Ketchikan Area  
Tongass National Forest  
P.O. Box 1  
Thorne Bay, Alaska 99919

Summary: The rapidly developing tourism industry in SE Alaska has brought about new recreation opportunities to be recognized on Prince of Wales Island. With the completion of new recreation lodges on the Island and the upgrade of the Forest Highway System across 800 miles of gravel roads easy access to rivers and streams provide a unique recreation experience to visitors to SE Alaska. There are currently no River Management Plans or specific guidelines in the Forest Plan regulating use on these rivers.

This study first addresses the existing situation, and recognizes a need to determine if the existing users perceive a problem in the management of the Thorne River. The project was limited to local users and utilizes the Nominal Group Technique to assess the problem, develop issues and concerns and rank those issues as they are viewed by the recreation user.

The Nominal Group Technique is a systematic approach designed to provide two specific types of output. First, it provides an extensive listing of issues relevant to the topic question; second, it provides quantified individual and aggregate measures of the relative importance of the ideas raised. This is accomplished through the public meeting format and involves eight steps.

The steps are:

1. Determine concise question.
2. Silent generation of ideas in writing.
3. Round-Robin recording of ideas.
4. Serial discussion for clarification.
5. Preliminary vote on item importance.
6. Tally vote and record results.
7. Discussion of preliminary vote.
8. Final vote.

Specific issues were developed from the local users over concerns in managing the river setting or lack of management. Five areas were identified for the Forest Service cooperating with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Sportfish Division to further work on. These areas include maintain habitat protection, complete use studies to support management recommendations, all fishing regulations should be enforced and potentially impose new strict regulations, boat use should be evaluated as well as enhancement for all species of fish on the river.

There is a tremendous amount of work to be completed while developing river management guidelines through the NEPA process evaluating all recreation river settings on Prince of Wales Island. The recreating public sampled for this project felt the current situation or status-quo management style will not maintain desired recreation experiences. Thus a proactive recreation manager will recognize this situation and act now to ensure potential recreation opportunities are not lost.

## CHAPTER I

### Introduction

The objective of this paper is to complete the scoping process, rank the issues and concerns raised and utilize this information at a later date through the NEPA process to develop specific management guidelines for the Thorne River. This information will ultimately be utilized in completion of comprehensive River Management Guidelines for the Thorne River as well as extended to other rivers on Prince of Wales Island in the Ketchikan Area of the Tongass National Forest. This will be accomplished through the revision of the Tongass National Forest Plan which is currently being undertaken and is scheduled for completion in 1991.

This project was conceived as a result of the Thorne Bay Ranger District receiving several new requests from Outfitter/Guides to operate on the river and our ability to issue or deny their permit. The recent sale of new private land on Prince of Wales Island has lead to the development of three new waterbased/roadbased recreation lodges. We are anticipating their interest in offering fish guiding on the numerous world class blue ribbon streams on the island. There are two established recreation lodges along with several individuals interested in offering day use road-based freshwater fishing trips across the island. We know there may be others who are currently outfitting illegally. Recent complaints from the local citizens on current use patterns



on the Thorne River as well as concern over development (or lack of it) including trails, access sites, litter, sanitation, boat launches and general use patterns in their favorite fishing holes all seem to be important issues to the users. This paper will stimulate interest and provide direction to be proactive Recreation Managers, before the situation gets out of control and we are left with severe degradation of both the sites, fisheries, and the recreation experience.

### Statement of the Problem

The rapidly developing tourism industry in SE Alaska (the third largest industry) has brought about new recreation opportunities for development on Prince of Wales Island. The Island is the third largest in the U.S., encompassing approximately two million acres with over 800 miles of gravel surfaced roads accessing 10 developing communities and numerous anadromous fish streams. This roaded recreation experience is unique to SE Alaska and offers easily accessible, affordable recreation opportunities for visitors to Alaska. Access to the Island is readily available through almost daily ferry service by the Alaska Marine Highway system during the prime recreation season, as well as through local floatplane charter businesses.

The Thorne River is not unique to the Island as it is one of 1000 cataloged anadromous streams rated as having excellent steelhead, silver, pink, chum, dog salmon, cutthroat trout and dolly varden fishing. The Thorne River is the most productive system on the Island for fisheries resource values. It has received recognition through numerous articles in national publications over the past year promoting the important steelhead fishery. Due to this publicity, the



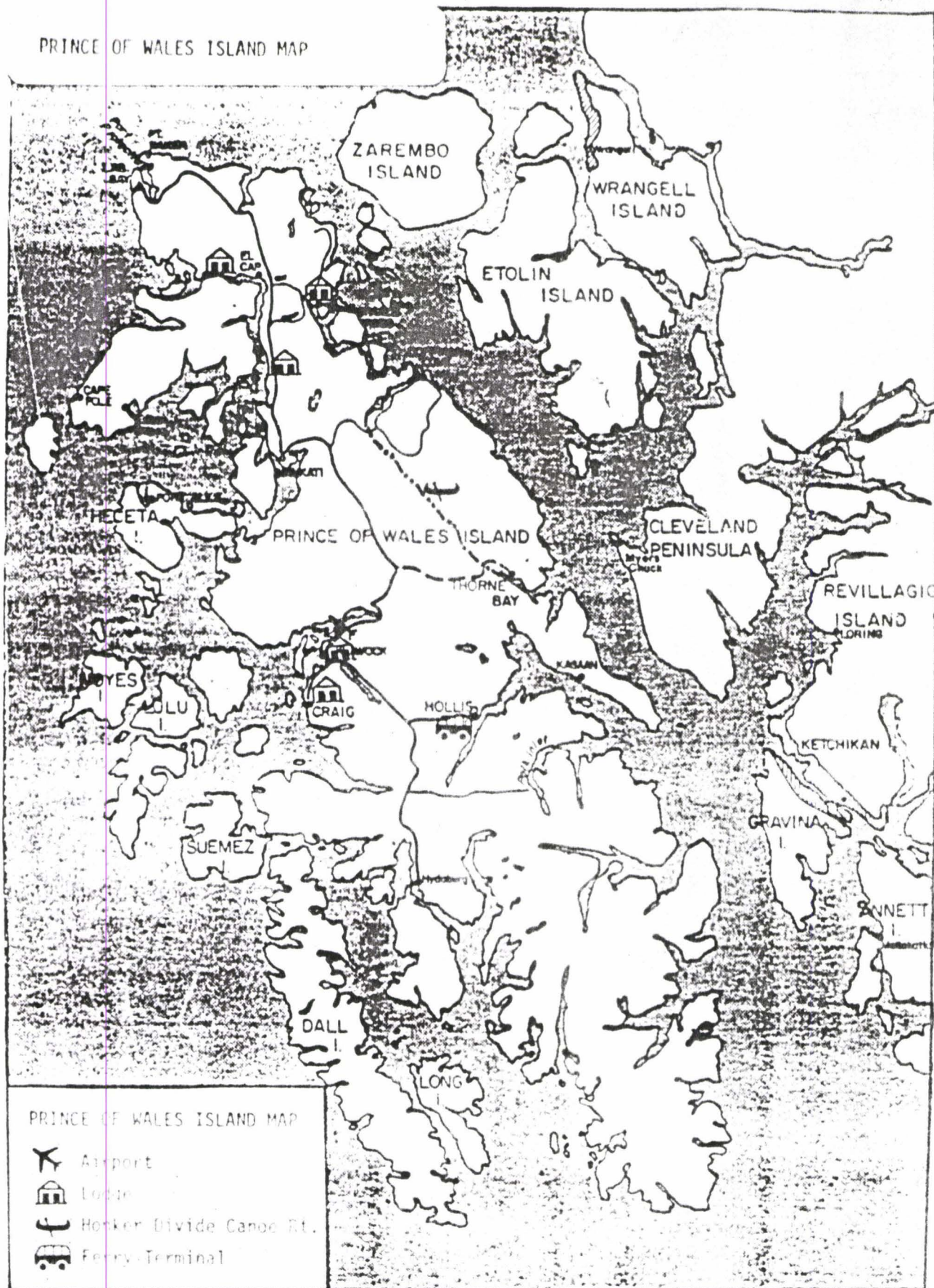
continuing improved access to the river through the ferry service and current reconstruction and upgrades of the Forest Highway System, and to the recent incorporation of Thorne Bay as a city of 400 year-round residents, the Thorne River receives a tremendous amount of use by both local island residents and the visiting recreating public. Only one Outfitter/Guide Permit has been issued for freshwater fishing on the island to date and is held by a local lodge owner. Due to the complexity of the project, budget limitations and timeframes, the scope of this project was limited to the Thorne River.

#### What is the Extent of the Problem?

At the onset of this project, the District and Forest were unsure as to the extent of the problem, or if there even was a perceived problem with the current management of the Thorne River. The second portion of the problem is on what basis should the District consistently issue or deny Outfitter/Guide Permits? Should we continue in the status quo mode and issue on a first come-first served basis, or should we be proactive to the situation and determine what type of recreation experience we are going to manage for?

There are currently no site specific project plans or management direction in the Tongass National Forest Plan (completed 1979) to adequately address proactive management of the Thorne River including issuance of Outfitter/Guide permits. The Alaska Region did not take an active role in issuing these permits until the passage of the new regulations in 1984. The Forest recognizes the importance of the contributions to the local and state economies brought about by these ventures, as well as the services they provide the recreating public. Due to the terrain, weather, and travel logistics, many

# PRINCE OF WALES ISLAND MAP



## PRINCE OF WALES ISLAND MAP



Airport



Lodge



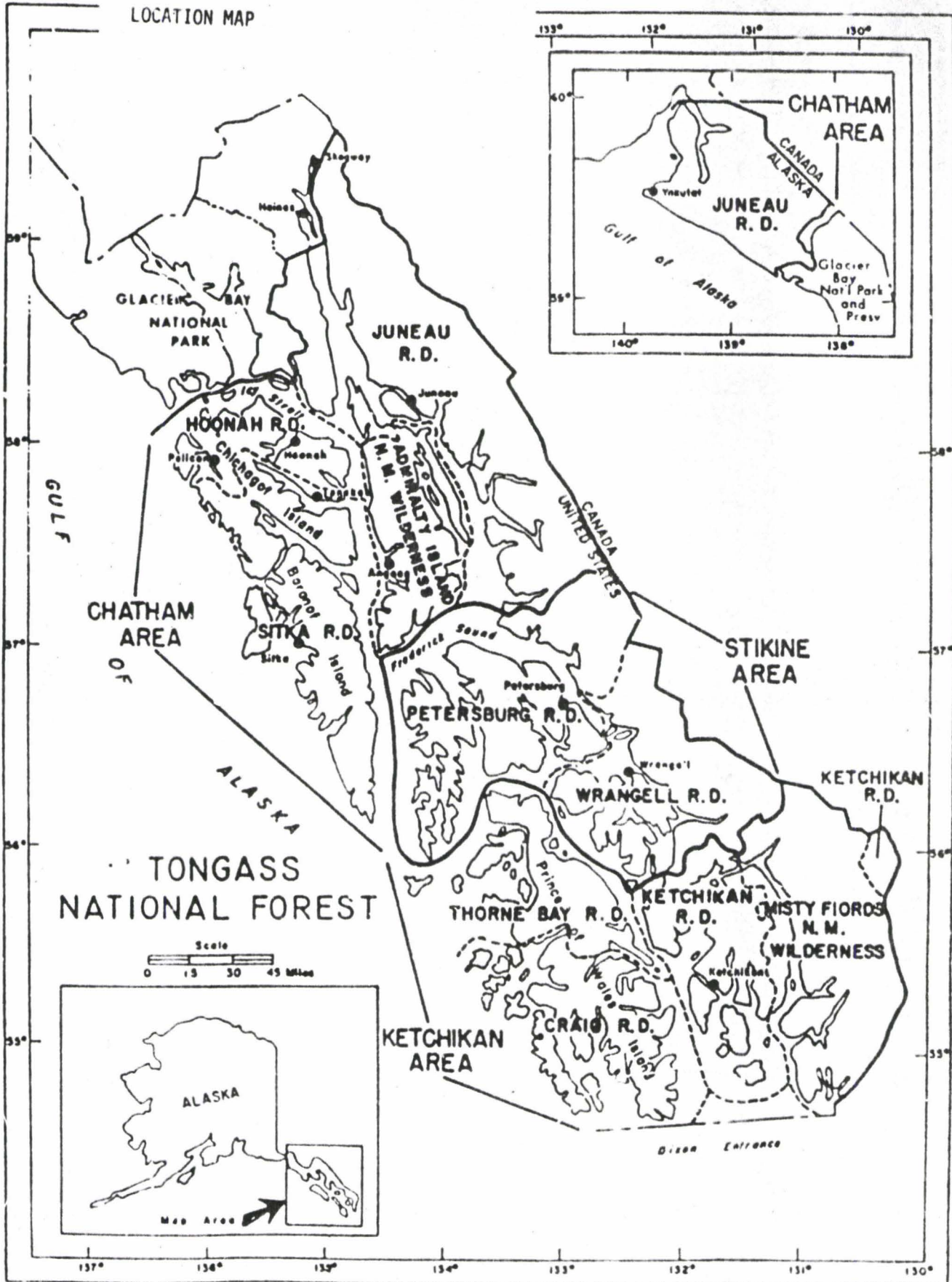
Horker Divide Canoe Rt.



Ferry Terminal



# LOCATION MAP



individuals prefer to book their vacation with an outfitter, hopefully ensuring a more successful fishing experience.

After consultation with the other Ranger Districts on the Tongass, the Prince of Wales Island situation is not unique. There are no Forest Service plans dealing with existing use patterns, regulating or limiting use, establishing carrying capacities or utilization of the recreation opportunity spectrum as a management tool to ensure we maintain a quality recreation experience for the public. There has been only one Interim Management Plan completed on the Situk River which addressed comprehensive management of a river corridor based on its nomination to become a Wild and Scenic River, but even this plan is not specific in placing any limits on the overall use of the river to maintain the recreation experience.

The problem includes looking at two things, the recreation experience and the fishing success rate. This project will assist in development of the process to maintain or enhance both of these. The Forest Service is responsible for management of the recreation experience and protection of the fisheries habitat, while the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (A.D.F. & G.) is responsible to manage the fisheries resource, including populations and enhancement activities and creating new fishing regulations when needed. Both agencies recognize a river management plan is not comprehensive or complete without evaluating the recreation experience and fishing success rate together. The first step in this process is for both agencies to cooperate, consolidate existing baseline data, and determine what the public would like us to manage for. After this is completed we can work together to develop specific management guidelines that will be useful across all road-based streams on the Island and throughout SE Alaska.



## CHAPTER II

### Review of Current Planning Documents

An initial step in this study was to identify current direction for Recreation Management in existing planning documents that would provide specific guidance to river management planning.

The resources consulted included the Tongass National Forest Land Management Plan (completed 1979), the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Alaska Regional Guide, the SE Alaska Area Guide Policies, the FEIS: LPK Timber Sale Plan for the 84-89 Operating Period, and the Prince of Wales Recreation Study.

The specific information in these documents give direction to:

- Recognize that recreation use radiates from communities; encourage private land and capital to develop services and accommodations to meet demands. Complement this development by facilitating the use of dispersed recreation opportunities in a radiating pattern from these service centers.

- Also, the Forest Service will coordinate with local communities through the public involvements process and will recognize community preferences as an integral factor in decisions where communities and residents may be significantly affected (Alaska Regional Guide).

The FEIS: LPK Timber Sale Plan for the 84-89 Operating Period adopted management direction for establishment of a canoe route along 38 miles of water, including the Thorne River from the estuary at the mouth of the river, through a series of lakes to a bridge crossing at Hatchery Creek. This management direction established a 1/4 mile no timber harvest, no roading zone adjacent to the water way with an extended 1/4 mile, no roading zone. The intent of this direction was to adopt a visual quality objective of partial retention from the waterway to protect the recreation experience afforded, with no future road access other than those already present.

#### Existing Recreation Experience

The existing recreation experience provided on the river can be divided into three ROS classes:

- Roaded Natural - From the mouth of the river at the estuary up to the Goose Creek Bridge.
- Semi-primitive Motorized - From Goose Creek Bridge past the popular 8 1/2 mile hole to the junction of the Fork of the North Thorne River.
- Semi-primitive Non-motorized - Primitive II - From the North Fork of the Thorne River to Rio Roberts Creek junction.

Along the Roaded Natural Section of the river there are several scenic pullouts overlooking the estuary. At Gravelly Creek, there is a 500 foot trail to easily access a site with 4 tables and fire rings. This is along a bend in the river and provides numerous sites to disperse the recreation users. There is one bridge where the main Forest Development Road crosses the river along with several pullouts and a site on the river that receives heavy dispersed camping use from visitors in trailers and campers. There is a primitive boat ramp adjacent to the Goose Creek crossing which receives moderate use by locals.

Along the Semi-primitive Motorized portion of the river, there are several pullouts off the main road with unmanaged trails up to one quarter mile in length accessing favorite fishing holes. The 8 1/2 mile hole is the last easy access point on the river from the road system.

Looking at the current recreation experience and the broad based management direction, this project was limited to completing the public scoping process of the local affected communities and identify their concerns in the management of the Thorne River. This step is critical since the first step of any planning process includes identifying the issues and concerns. To date the users had never been given an opportunity to publicly address their concerns. It was recommended at Clemson University to research and utilize the Nominal Group Technique as a means of gathering this information.

## CHAPTER III

### Procedure

After reviewing several public scoping techniques and information received from Westfornet, the group planning and research process termed the Nominal Group Technique (NGT) seemed appropriate to utilize for this study.

This was determined because it was a relatively simple, cost effective means to gather together the local community users representing both the general public and commercial outfitters in one place for a short period of time and acquire the necessary data.

The NGT process is a systematic approach designed to provide two specific types of output. First, it provides an extensive listing of issues relevant to the topic question; second, it provides quantified individual and aggregate measures of the relative importance of the ideas raised. The outcome of a public meeting is a ranked listing of issues the participants feel address the question being presented. In this study it was a ranked listing of issues the river users felt the Forest Service and Alaska Department of Fish and Game should address in the management of the Thorne River.



## Steps in Using the Nominal Group Technique

1. Determine Question that is relevant, clear, and narrowed to the point that will be utilized during the public meeting. Inform participants ahead of time so they can be prepared.
2. At the meeting after presentation of the question, Silent Generation of Ideas in Writing. Once participants have an understanding of what is expected, charge them to silently and independently write ideas in brief phrases or statements. (Provide writing utensils and paper.)
3. Round-Robin recording of ideas, objective is to map the group's thinking through quick, effective mechanical recording of ideas generated in the participants words. Use flip charts in front of room.
4. Serial Discussion for Clarification. Objective is to clarify meaning of items written down and explain reasons for agreement or disagreement. Indicate final judgements will be expressed by voting so arguments are unnecessary. Eliminate duplicate items recorded.
5. Preliminary Vote on Item Importance. Ask the group to select from the entire list a specific number of priority (important) items and rank-order or rate those selected items.
6. Tally Vote and Record Results. In front of group.

7. Discussion of Preliminary Vote. Role of step is clarification, additional comments or concerns to add to the list. Round-robin discussion.

8. Final Vote. Repeat steps 5 and 6.

#### Advantages and Disadvantages of the Nominal Group Technique

There are some advantages and disadvantages that must be weighed in deciding if the NGT process is appropriate for use as a public scoping tool in a recreation management study. Those include:

##### Advantages

1. -Provides reliable data.  
-Everyone present contributes possible solutions to the problem.
2. -Focus of meeting is on gathering and exchanging information for decisions rather than making decisions.
3. -Session leader is able to ensure all participants have an equal voice.  
Reduces inhibitions. Increases participation.
4. -Each participant plays an equal role in the final ranking.
5. -Respondent commitment is high.

6. -Lends itself to phased research and planning since data are gathered sequentially.

#### Disadvantages

1. -Need to assemble NGT participants.
2. -NGT is not a substitute for structured survey sampling methods.
3. -Process does not use probability sampling.
4. -Group leader/recorder may not accurately record participants response.
5. -Output of session is relatively unstructured.
6. -Range of topics limited due to time required to adequately gather information of specific topic questions.
7. -Several public scoping meetings may be necessary among specific user groups to adequately sample the users. If this is not done, the data could be swayed by a particular viewpoint if the group does not address all opposing issues. The results from all the the meetings can be compiled and ranked accordingly.



## CHAPTER IV

### Public Scoping Meeting

A public scoping meeting was held in Thorne Bay on February 29, 1988, to address the question "What issues should the Forest Service address in completion of a management plan for the Thorne River?"

This meeting was advertised in the local weekly paper during the three consecutive weeks prior to the meeting along with posting in strategic locations around Thorne Bay.

The District also sent personal notification letters to a list of 23 prospective outfitter/guides including the four local lodge owners who had either expressed an interest in the past to operate freshwater fish guiding on Prince of Wales Island or had formally requested through a Special Use Permit application and had not followed through. We also invited local publics who are avid fisherman and may be interested, as well as the local Rod and Gun Club which was recently formed in Thorne Bay.

The author served as facilitator/moderator of the meeting and had one assistant to help in writing down issues as they were generated. Twenty-eight individuals attended the meeting with representation from local fisherman, lodge owners, current Outfitter/Guide permittees, non fishing recreating publics, A.D.F.&G. personnel, the Thorne Bay City Mayor, Rod and Gun Club enthusiasts, and several Forest Service employees. This was excellent participation based on other local efforts and effectively brought out diverse opposing issues, thus only one public meeting was held.

The list of initial issues and concerns generated during the public scoping meeting are noted in Appendix A. The meeting participants completed NGT steps one through five at the meeting and were getting restless as they had been participating approximately two and a half hours. During step five, there was a general feeling by the participants they had been limited in their voting, and that some important issues had received no votes, implying there was no interest when there really was. The facilitator agreed to recapture the information and notify the participants of the results. The information, was compiled, the issues and concerns were grouped into six areas, the preliminary ranking was displayed and mailed out to all 28 participants giving them an opportunity to rank the issues. 19 completed surveys were returned showing the final ranking of issues as people had responded.

## Results from Public Scoping Meeting and Surveys:

Follow-up Questionnaire that was mailed to participants.

Below are the Issues and Concerns developed in the Public Scoping meeting on 2/29/88. The issues were categorized by topic and preliminary ranking. Please rank all issues with #1 being most important to you and #39 least important. Please use comment space for additional issues or clarification.

### RESOURCE PROTECTION ENHANCEMENT

<u>Preliminary Ranking</u>		<u>Final Ranking</u>	<u>Managing Agency</u>
<u>1</u>	Habitat Protection-Prohibit any activity that will negatively impact the spawning or rearing habitat on the River. Steelhead highest priority.	<u>1</u>	FS/ADF&G
<u>18</u>	Don't want hatchery Fish. Look at keeping <u>wild</u> Steelhead wild. Look at keeping all species wild.	<u>17</u>	ADF&G
<u>19</u>	Protect river pollution including banks stability and sedimentation, i.e. litter, sanitation.	<u>8</u>	FS
<u>22</u>	Habitat protection of Trumpeter Swans and other protected species that use Thorne River.	<u>13</u>	FS
<u>22</u>	Close Thorne River estuary to bear hunting.	<u>29</u>	ADF&G
<u>23</u>	Fishery enhancement of wild stock. Alternate to hatchery bred, to enhance wild species of steelhead using wild species.	<u>10</u>	ADF&G
<u>24</u>	Locate developed structures 200+ feet from rivers. Not visible from river. And/or keep close to Saltwater.	<u>15</u>	FS
<u>0</u>	Other species of fish besides steelhead need protection/enhancement. Sockeye, silver, all salmon, trout need to be included in management plan.	<u>5</u>	FS/ADF&G

Comments: Need to determine fish populations and develop proper management of wild stocks with minimal enhancement. Broodstock and subsequent stocking of fry or smolts should come from native fish. Most activities accomplished through cooperation from the Forest Service and A.D.F. & G.



# BOATS AND ACCESS

<u>Preliminary Ranking</u>		<u>Final Ranking</u>	<u>Managing Agency</u>
<u>2</u>	No power boats and motors on the river. Impose motor size limit restriction. What size_____? 4- no motors responses, 7-under 15 hp. response requesting limitation	<u>4</u>	ADF&G/ FS
<u>11</u>	Developing trails on other rivers would reduce impact to Thorne River. Improve access to freshwater lakes.	<u>9</u>	FS
<u>14</u>	Access: Above 8 1/2 Mile-Keep remote. Below Goose Creek Bridge-can develop.	<u>7</u>	FS
<u>25</u>	No new boat launches or trails developed. No campgrounds	<u>19</u>	ADF&G/FS
<u>0</u>	Close Goose Creek "boat launch" underneath bridge for spawning gravel habitat protection.	<u>26</u>	FS
<u>0</u>	No commercial power boat use on river (Jet Boats).	<u>16</u>	FS
<u>0</u>	No commercial drift boats.	<u>22</u>	FS
<u>0</u>	Don't develop new trails on the Thorne River.	<u>25</u>	FS

Comments: Need new trails. Subsistence hunting and trapping users of river during fishing off season utilize motors and should not be penalized through year round motorized closure.

# FISHING REGULATIONS

<u>Preliminary Ranking</u>		<u>Final Ranking</u>	<u>Managing Agency</u>
<u>4</u>	Regulations require enforcement, both new and old. State Troopers to make checks on enforcement.	<u>3</u>	ADF&G/ State
<u>5</u>	100% catch and release for everyone, until study of steelhead completed. Can apply to <u>all</u> rivers (esp. road access). Could apply State wide.	<u>9</u>	ADF&G
<u>7</u>	Use of single barbless hooks for steelhead on all rivers.	<u>7</u>	ADF&G
<u>8</u>	Season limit on steelhead, i.e. 2 fish/year or punchcard.	<u>6</u>	ADF&G
<u>12</u>	Educate the public to fishing regulations and handling steelhead.	<u>14</u>	ADF&G/FS
<u>21</u>	Outlaw bait.	<u>34</u>	ADF&G
<u>0</u>	Fly fishing regulations start 1000' away from saltwater (spawning areas) bait allowed below 1000' towards saltwater.	<u>32</u>	ADF&G
<u>0</u>	Existing heavy use on lower portion of river. Catch and release for that portion below Goose Creek Bridge.	<u>28</u>	ADF&G
<u>0</u>	Fly/fishing-catch and release only for steelhead.	<u>33</u>	ADF&G

Comments: Fishing Regulations would be imposed and enforced by ADF&G.

## EXISTING USE/FUTURE USE

<u>Preliminary Ranking</u>		<u>Final Ranking</u>	<u>Managing Agency</u>
<u>3</u>	Need studies/data to support conclusions and recommendations.	<u>2</u>	ADF&G
<u>6</u>	ACT NOW.	<u>26</u>	Both *
<u>15</u>	Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game create stamp or something to raise money for studies.	<u>21</u>	ADF&G
<u>16</u>	Determine existing use patterns. Establish carrying capacity on the river, i.e. People use/day of the week/in conjunction with enforcement.	<u>11</u>	FS
<u>20</u>	Shut down river.	<u>31</u>	FS/ADF&G

Comments: \*May be a false representation due to the omission of a line to respond on the questionnaire. Most people did not recognize this.

## RECREATION EXPERIENCE

<u>Preliminary Ranking</u>		<u>Final Ranking</u>	
<u>9</u>	Keep camping off rivers. Keep development small scale.	<u>20</u>	FS
<u>10</u>	Provide quality recreation experience.	<u>12</u>	FS
<u>17</u>	Need diversity of recreation experiences along river corridor. Include access for elderly and handicapped.	<u>9</u>	FS
<u>0</u>	Reduce hazardous road conditions, parking, dust, and reconstruction.	<u>18</u>	FS
<u>0</u>	Developed sites need litter containers and be maintained.	<u>30</u>	FS

Comments: Encourage pack in/pack out.



# COMMERCIAL USE OF RIVER

<u>Preliminary Ranking</u>		<u>Final Ranking</u>	<u>Managing Agency</u>
<u>13</u>	End commercial use of Thorne River until Forest Service and ADF&G get report on fish decline and existing fish population.	<u>9</u>	FS
<u>20</u>	Don't be exclusive to an individual outfitter/guide.	<u>23</u>	FS
<u>0</u>	Need to consider tourism over local use on river and not impose too many regulations.	<u>27</u>	FS/ADF&G
<u>0</u>	ADF&G to create and issue new sport fishing guide license to gain commercial user data throughout SE Alaska. This is currently in effect on rivers in Northern and Central Alaska.	<u>24</u>	ADF&G

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

\* \* \*

After completing the public meeting and evaluating the two priority rankings, the five resulting issues the public consistently felt most important to address first included:

1. Habitat Protection - Prohibit any activity that will negatively impact the spawning or rearing habitat of the river.
2. Complete studies of existing use data to support conclusions and management recommendations.
3. Regulations require enforcement, both new and old. Need State troopers and game wardens to have more of a presence on the Island.
4. Address use of boats on the river, to include total closure in some areas to motorsize limitations in other areas.
5. Address protection and enhancement of all species of fish in management guidelines with particular interest in steelhead fishery.

Where Do We Go From Here?

After analyzing the issues and concerns raised through the Nominal Group Technique there are several items that need to be completed, prior to being able to establish the specific management direction for the River.

1. In order to effectively protect the habitat, we need to establish the baseline data on existing use, determine the limiting resource, and catalog the fisheries habitat, including rearing and spawning areas. Management guidelines that are established should protect or enhance all fisheries habitat. A thorough evaluation of fisheries enhancement should be considered utilizing the Klawock Fish Hatchery and native fish stock.

By initiating an interest in this process, we have gained the support and funding by A.D.F.&G. to assist in completion of a Steelhead Management Plan for Prince of Wales Island. This study will include establishing a statistically sound sampling method to determine the existing use as well as the success rate and desired experience of the recreationist. A.D.F.&G. has recommended to the Forest Service that we establish a moratorium on issuing any Outfitter/Guide Permits on the Thorne River and several other streams rated as excellent steelhead fisheries pending completion of these studies (approximately July 1989).

All Districts on the Forest are cooperating to gain support for this proposed moratorium so that we approach this situation consistently and treat all perspective permittees fairly.

2. Through cooperation with A.D.F. & G., and Challenge Grant Funding through the recreation initiative we are using employees and volunteers from the Forest Service A.D.F. & G., and local Rod and Gun Club to assist in completing a recreation survey/creel census survey from existing users of the river. After evaluating the existing use, and users recreation experience sought after, we must determine what recreation experience we want to manage for across all river settings.

We will be able to determine the carrying capacity for that experience, and establish limits of acceptable change so that we may monitor use and have a way to measure what is actually occurring, and determine when use has exceeded the experience we are trying to provide. If the use does exceed this experience level we will have to evaluate regulating use in some way.

The Forest would benefit if we coordinate with current researchers such as Bo Shelby from Oregon State University or Dr. Roger Clark and Alan Jubenville from the University of Alaska-Fairbanks to determine what type of research has been complete to date to assist in establishing a coefficient to set the carrying capacity by ROS class. This coefficient, once developed could be expanded across the Tongass National Forest where similar activities take place and could be incorporated into the Tongass National Forest Plan Revision currently being undertaken.

3. An evaluation as to the feasibility and appropriateness of nominating the Thorne River as a Wild and Scenic River should be considered during the Forest Plan Revision. It is appropriate to incorporate the entire Honker Divide Canoe Route in this nomination process to recognize it provides a unique road accessible saltwater to saltwater recreation experience.



4. Stricter fishing regulations should be considered by A.D.F. & G. in protection of the fisheries population along river corridors especially on steelhead streams. New regulations have been proposed to the Alaska Board of Fisheries and will be evaluated during their next session, February 1989. Several regulations mentioned during the scoping meeting included catch and release, use of barbless hooks, fly fishing only, and a punch card imposing a catch limit/season. The public felt there should be more presence in the field on enforcement of new and existing regulations. This can be accomplished by the State trooper, game warden or perhaps Forest Service personnel.

5. The results from the recreation survey/creel census survey will assist in addressing the use of boats and motors on the river. A logical point to regulate boats with motors is above the 8 1/2 mile hole where there is a semi-primitive non-motorized setting. A size limitation of motors should be evaluated cooperatively by A.D.F. & G. and the Forest Service. Most publics felt a 15 hp or smaller motor was appropriate for use on the river with no jet boats allowed.

6. In evaluating comprehensive management prescriptions or guidelines for any river, recreation use associated with all species of fish should be considered. Public feeling indicated if limitations are imposed now on the steelhead fishery and not applied to other species, it will not be long before there is a problem there as well.

There is a tremendous amount of work that needs to be completed in order to develop the river management guidelines to be incorporated through the NEPA process in a broad sense during the revision of the Forest Plan, or later through a specific recreation plan for Prince of Wales Island evaluating all river settings. After completion of the public scoping process on current management of the Thorne River utilizing the Nominal Group Technique, it was generally understood that the current situation and status-quo management style will not maintain the desired recreation experience being sought. The issues the District perceived to be a problem were expressed, as well as many others that we had not considered. All of this information will assist us in tracking our progress in managing the river. A proactive recreation manager will recognize this situation and act now to ensure potential recreation opportunities are not lost.

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APPENDIX A  
Initial Issues and Concerns

Nominal Group Technique- Step 3: List of Issues and Concerns in current management of the Thorne River. (Public Meeting Results)

1. End commercial use of Thorne River until Forest Service and Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game get report on fish decline and fish population.
2. Regulations require enforcement.  
State Troopers to make checks on enforcement.
3. Hazardous road conditions  
Parking, dust
4. NO power boats and motors on the river.  
NO Drift boats, (flat bottom)
5. Heavy use on lower portion of river.  
Catch and release for that portion.
6. Fly/Fishing  
Catch and release only for steelhead
7. Use of single barbless hooks for steelhead on all rivers.
8. Outlaw bait.
9. Season limit on Steelhead  
i.e. 2 fish/year or punchcard
10. Other developed trails on other rivers would reduce impact to Thorne River  
Access to other lakes
11. Habitat Protection  
Steelhead highest priority.
12. Keep camping off of rivers.  
Keep development small scale.
13. 100% catch and release for everyone, until study of steelhead completed.  
Can apply to all rivers (esp. road access).  
Could apply State wide.
14. Don't want hatchery fish.  
Look at keeping wild Steelhead wild  
Look at keeping a'l species wild.
15. Determine use patterns.  
Establish carrying capacity on the river.  
i.e. People use/day in conjunction with enforcement.

16. Need studies/data to support conclusions and recommendations.
17. ACT NOW.
18. Need diversity of recreation experiences.  
Access for elderly and handicapped
19. Access  
Above 8 1/2 - Keep remote.  
Below Goose Creek Bridge - can develop.
20. River pollution includes banks  
i.e. litter, sanitation
21. Educate the public to fishing regulations and handling steelhead.
22. Sockeye species important too!  
Silver, all salmon, trout
23. NO commercial power boat use on river.
24. NO commercial drift boats.
25. Shut down river.
26. NO boat launches or trails developed.  
NO Campgrounds.
27. Close Goose Creek "boat launch" underneath bridge.
28. Don't be exclusive to an individual
29. Locate developed structures 200+ feet from rivers.  
Not visible from river.  
Or/and keep close to Saltwater.
30. Don't develop trails.
31. Fly fishing regulations start 1000' away from saltwater (spawning areas)  
bait allowed below 1000' towards saltwater.
32. Developed sites need litter containers and to be maintained.
33. To many regulations consider tourism over local use on river.
34. Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game issue new sport fishing guide license to  
gain user data.
35. Provide quality recreation experience.
36. Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game create stamp or something to raise money for  
studies.
37. Habitat protection of Trumpeter Swans and other protected species that use  
Thorne River.



38. Close Thorne River estuary to bear hunting.

39. Fishery enhancement of wild stock.

Alternate to hatchery bred, to enhance wild species of steelhead using wild species.

Nominal Group Technique-step 6: Tally Vote and Record Results

The group was asked to identify the seven most important issues and rate them with a 7 being most important and a 1 being least important.

Issue	Number of Votes							Total Points	Priority Ranking
	Least Imp.	1	2	3	4	5	6		
1.						5	12	17	12
2.	1			12	4	10	18	14	59
3.									
4.				18	8	35		14	75
5.									2
6.									
7.	1	8	15	8	5	6	14	43	7
8.						6		6	19
9.	1	2	9	12		18		42	8
10.	1	4		4	10			19	11
11.		2	3	8	25	12	70	120	1
12.	3	4	6	16				29	9
13.	1	2	3	8	20	6	14	54	5
14.	2	6		4				12	16
15.		2	3	4		6		15	14
16.			3	8	20	12	28	71	3
17.	1		3	4	5	12	28	53	6
18.	3				5	6		14	15
19.			3			6	7	16	13
20.		2						2	23
21.		4		4				8	17
22.	3	8		8				19	11
23.									
24.									
25.							7	7	18
26.		2						2	23
27.									
28.							7	7	18
29.			3					3	22
30.									
31.									
32.									
33.									
34.									
35.			6	8		6		20	10
36.	2	2		4			7	15	14
37.					5			5	20
38.					5			5	20
39.	1		3					4	21

APPENDIX B  
Participants in Meeting

1. Carl, Mark E.  
P.O. Box 100, Thorne Bay, AK 99919
2. Wyrick, Ken  
P.O. Box 2027, Wrangell, AK 99929
3. Beck, Tom  
P.O. Box 328, Thorne Bay, AK 99919
4. Haydu, Chuck  
P.O. Box 145, Klawock, AK 99925
5. Fabry, Skip  
P.O. Box 45, Klawock, AK 99925
6. Welton, William H.  
P.O. Box 145, Thorne Bay, AK 99919
7. Anderson, Neil  
U.S.F.S., Thorne Bay, AK 99919
8. Gefre, Nick  
P.O. Box 19172, Thorne Bay, AK 99919
9. Wagnor, Dan  
P.O. Box 483, Thorne Bay, AK 99919
10. Freeman, Glenn  
P.O. Box 101, Klawock, AK 99925
11. Holbrook, Ken  
P.O. Box 475, Thorne Bay, AK 99919
12. Krueger, Mike  
P.O. Box 225, Thorne Bay, AK 99919
13. Redmond, Kim  
P.O. Box 135, Thorne Bay, AK 99919
14. Jones, Will  
P.O. Box 72, Klawock, AK 99925
15. Johnston, Pete  
P.O. Box 1, Thorne Bay, AK 99919
16. Johnston, Elaine  
P.O. Box 384, Thorne Bay, AK 99919

17. McCormick, Bob  
General Delivery, Thorne Bay, AK 99919
18. Sawyer, Ralph  
P.O. Box 450, Thorne Bay, AK 99919
19. Clutcher, George  
P.O. Box 349, Thorne Bay, AK 99919
20. Ollward, Alan  
P.O. Box 1727, Wrangell, AK
21. Hubbard, Wade  
P.O. Box 307, Thorne Bay, AK 99919
22. Hamberg, Barth  
P.O. Box 348, Thorne Bay, AK 99919
23. Harke, Vince  
P.O. Box 122, Thorne Bay, AK 99919
24. Ramsey, Les  
P.O. Box 202, Thorne Bay, AK 99919
25. McDonald, Harvey E.  
P.O. Box 237, Thorne Bay, AK 99919
26. Sawyer, Scott  
P.O. Box 198, Thorne Bay, AK 99919
27. Williams, Sony  
General Delivery, Thorne Bay, AK 99919
28. Norton, Bob  
P. O. Box 494, Thorne Bay, AK 99919



APPENDIX C  
LETTERS OF TRANSMITTAL AND  
SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE

Agriculture

Region 10

Longass National Forest  
Thorne Bay Ranger District  
P.O. Box 1  
Thorne Bay, AK 99919

Reply to 2720

Date: February 5, 1988

Dear Friends:

The Thorne Bay Ranger District would like to complete a River Management Plan for the Thorne River. As a preliminary step in the planning process, we need to identify the issues and concerns you have regarding management of the river. The U.S. Forest Service is responsible for managing the recreation experience on the river as well as maintaining or enhancing the fisheries habitat while A.D.F. & G. are responsible to manage the fish resource.

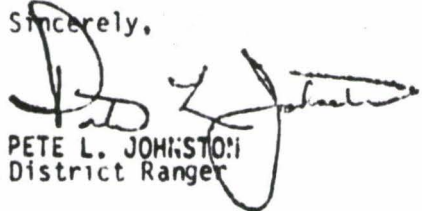
Some of the issues we anticipate are of importance include:

- access to the river
- existing and future development of recreation sites
- carrying capacity
- outfitter guide permits
- co-operation with A.D.F. & G.

We would like to hold a public meeting February 29, 1988 at 7:00 P.M. in the Bay Chalet Building in Thorne Bay to discuss those issues you feel we need to address in the plan. We anticipate this plan will be used to assist in management of other rivers on Prince of Wales Island that receive similar types of use. Thus it is imperative that we have your comments to ensure we are managing the river appropriately.

If you are unable to attend the meeting, please send your written comments to the address above by March 3, 1988 or contact Debbie Norton or Faye Krueger at 828-3304.

Sincerely,

  
PETE L. JOHNSTON  
District Ranger

020588 0930 r1 2720 DN/kt



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Thorne Bay Ranger District

P.O. Box 1  
Thorne Bay, AK 99919  
(907) 828-3304

Caring for the Land and Serving People

Reply to: 2720

Date: March 25, 1988

Ken Holbrook  
P.O. Box 1328  
Petersburg, AK 99823

Dear Ken:

Thank you for attending the meeting on developing issues to be included in the Thorne River Management Plan. Enclosed for your review are the results from the rating of issues developed. Many people felt some of the issues raised were important but received no points. Because of this, you will also find a form to re-vote and rate all issues according to how important they are to you. We commend your interest in developing this plan. We would appreciate receiving the forms reflecting your re-vote in the enclosed envelope by April 4, 1988. If you have further comments, feel free to contact Debbie Norton or Faye Krueger at the above address or 828-3304.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
PETE L. JOHNSTON  
District Ranger

Enclosure

cc: E. Johnson

032263 0795 r1 2720 kt



## BOATS AND ACCESS

Preliminary  
Ranking

Final  
Ranking

- |    |  |   |
|----|--|---|
| 2  | No power boats and motors on the river. Impose motor size limit restriction. What size_____?               | — |
| 11 | Developing trails on other rivers would reduce impact to Thorne River. Improve access to freshwater lakes. | — |
| 14 | Access: Above 8 1/2 Mile—Keep remote.<br>Below Goose Creek Bridge—can develop.                             | — |
| 25 | No new boat launches or trails developed. No campgrounds.  | — |
| Q  | Close Goose Creek "boat launch" underneath bridge for spawning gravel habitat protection.                  | — |
| Q  | No commercial power boat use on river (Jet Boats).   | — |
| Q  | No commercial drift boats.   | — |
| Q  | Don't develop new trails on the Thorne River.  | — |

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## FISHING REGULATIONS

Preliminary  
Ranking

Final  
Ranking

- |    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| 4  | Regulations require enforcement, both new and old. State Troopers to make checks on enforcement.  | — |
| 5  | 100% catch and release for everyone, until study of steelhead completed. Can apply to <u>all</u> rivers (esp. road access). Could apply State wide. | — |
| 7  | Use of single barbless hooks for steelhead on all rivers.   | — |
| 8  | Season limit on steelhead, i.e. 2 fish/year or punchcard.   | — |
| 12 | Educate the public to fishing regulations and handling steelhead.   | — |
| 21 | Outlaw bait.  | — |







- Q Fly fishing regulations start 1000' away from saltwater (spawning areas) bait allowed below 1000' towards saltwater. —
- Q Existing heavy use on lower portion of river. Catch and release for that portion below Goose Creek Bridge. —
- Q Fly/fishing-catch and release only for steelhead. —

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### EXISTING USE/FUTURE USE

<u>Preliminary Ranking</u>		<u>Final Ranking</u>
3	Need studies/data to support conclusions and recommendations.	—
6	ACT NOW.	
15	Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game create stamp or something to raise money for studies.	—
16	Determine existing use patterns. Establish carry capacity on the river, i.e. People use/day of the week/in conjunction with enforcement.	—
20	Shut down river.	—

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### RECREATION EXPERIENCE

<u>Preliminary Ranking</u>		<u>Final Ranking</u>
2	Keep camping off rivers. Keep development small scale.	—
10	Provide quality recreation experience.	—





17

Need diversity of recreation experiences along river corridor. Include access for elderly and handicapped. —

Q Reduce hazardous road conditions, parking, dust, and reconstruction. —

Q Developed sites need litter containers and be maintained. —

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

### COMMERCIAL USE OF RIVER

Preliminary  
Ranking

Final  
Ranking

13 End commercial use of Thorne River until Forest Service and ADF&G get report on fish decline and existing fish population. —

20 Don't be exclusive to an individual outfitter/guide. —

Q Need to consider tourism over local use on river and not impose too many regulations. —

Q ADF&G to create and issue new sport fishing guide license to gain commercial user data throughout SE Alaska. This is currently in effect on rivers in Northern and Central Alaska. —

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

We appreciate your interest in participating in this scoping process. Please return in enclosed envelope by April 4, 1988.

